THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM JETHMALANI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government has recently constituted a committee of experts with a view to examine the existing Monopolies an Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1969 and to shift the focus of the law from curbing monopolies to promoting competition and to suggest a modern competition law in line with international developments to suit Indian conditions. The Committee will also deal with consumer interests and acquisitions/mergers of companies.

The Committee has been asked to submit its report within a period of three months. The Committee has requested time upto 31st March, 2000 to submit its report.

Formulation of National Highway Development Programme

178. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has a National Highway Development Programme for the country;

(b) if so, whether a Golden Quadrilateral and East West corridor will be built on priority under this plan;

(c) when the work on the project will commence;

(d) what will be the year of the completion; and

(e) whether these roads will be freshly laid or will it be an expansion of the existing highways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The work on the project has already commenced.

(d) This project is scheduled for completion by the year 2010.

(e) The programme mainly involves expansion/upgradation of existing national highways.